

18. MUNIAS AS FACULTATIVE NEST PARASITES

Common silverbill or whitethroated munia (*Lonchura malabarica*) habitually utilises old nests of the baya (*Ploceus philippinus*) for laying eggs (HANDBOOK Vol. 10—Ali and Ripley). I have been watching whitethroated munia along with other munias since 1981 at Tatar Pur (27°47'N, 76°31'E), Alwar District, Rajasthan utilizing the old nests of baya as a facultative nest parasite. I have frequently seen whitethroated munia utilizing old nests of *Ploceus benghalensis* also.

In addition I have seen 3 pairs of spotted munia (*Lonchura punctulata*) utilizing the old nests of *Ploceus philippinus* for breeding on

dense (*Acacia tortilis*) trees in Panchayat Land Plantations at Tatar Pur in August 1983 and September 1984.

During August 1984 when I was going to inspect a *Ploceus philippinus* colony in Tatar Pur Mixed Plantation, I saw a Red Munia (*Estrilda amandava*) sitting on the chinstrap inside a half built baya nest. This year, on 16th July 1985 I again saw a Red Munia hovering around a completed nest of *Ploceus philippinus* in the same locality. Though I have seen red munia twice inside or around baya nests, I have so far not come across the bird actually nesting within.

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19. ADDITIONS TO THE HERPETOFAUNA OF CHILKA LAGOON,  
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No research is reported on the herpetofauna of the Chilka lagoon, Orissa since the pioneering investigations by Annandale (1915) probably because Indian herpetologists have thus far paid little attention to the estuaries. However, the on-going multidisciplinary project taken up by the Estuarine Biological Station of the Zoological Survey of India located at Berhampore has generated an upsurge of interest in the herpetofauna of the lake's Islands, hills, and shores with the result that quite a few lizards and snakes are recorded as additions to the faunal list of the area under study.

In the course of the third expedition to the lake conducted during December 1986 the authors were pleasantly surprised to find a

colony of the Dwarf Rock-Lizard *Psammophilus blanfordianus* in the Ghantasila Hill and on the Bird Island situated not far from Rambha. Some of the individuals which we saw were adults (195 mm) in breeding colour, with swollen and scarlet-red cheeks. We were equally surprised to find the presence of the Beaked Sea Snake *Enhydrina schistosa*, a juvenile (750 mm) and an adult (1093 mm) of which were picked up from the fishing nets operated in the midwaters of the lake off Rambha and Barkul. Although Malcolm Smith (1943) made no mention of the likelihood of the occurrence of this species in estuaries and Annandale (loc. cit.) failed to record it from the Chilka lake, the fact that the Beaked Sea

### MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

Snake frequents the estuaries is established beyond doubt (Murthy 1977). Local fishermen call the Beaked Sea Snake 'Dushta Sarp' which in Oriya means a very bad snake, indicating the fear for the snake's deadly venom and its toxicity. Another noteworthy record made in the same trip is that of the Smooth Water Snake *Enhydris enhydris*, a juvenile (450 mm) of which was picked up from the shallow waters of the lake at Ghodedowda village.

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It may therefore be concluded that the specimens of the Dwarf Rock-Lizard, the Beaked Sea Snake, and the Smooth Water Snake are not only additions but also the first documented records from the Chilka lagoon.

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#### 20. RETENTION OF EGGS BY THE EMYDINE TURTLES *KACHUGA TECTUM TECTUM* AND *KACHUGA SMITHI*

Turtles are known to have a tendency to retain eggs either in the oviduct, cloacal bursa or in the abdominal cavity (Risley 1933, Cagle 1944, Cagle and Tihen 1948, Duda and Gupta 1978). The retention has been attributed to unfavourable weather conditions or lack of proper facilities for egg laying during laying season.

On 22.4.1977, a specimen of *Kachuga tectum tectum* was noted to have a shelled egg inside its highly distended right cloacal

bursa. The ovary looked spent and showed the presence of 11 ruptured follicles, 7 in the right and 4 in the left, all of which were at nearly the same stage of differentiation into corpora lutea. The oviducts were fully developed but, did not show any eggs within. In weight and measurements and external and internal features, the turtle looked a healthy normal female.

Judged from the number of the ruptured follicles in the two ovaries, the turtle had